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# THE ROLE OF HCI RESEARCH IN THE MIS DISCIPLINE

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# THE ROLE OF HCI RESEARCH IN THE MIS DISCIPLINE

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Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) is an interdisciplinary field that has attracted researchers, educators, and practitioners from many different disciplines. HCI has gained even more attention during recent years in which technology has developed at a fast pace. To better utilize this advanced technology, we need to better understand users, their tasks within different contexts, and the interplay among users, tasks, IT, and contexts/environments. Despite broad interest in HCI from a variety of disciplines, we believe that there are unique HCI perspectives, considerations and issues that have not received much attention by other associations or disciplines, but are of great interest to or have been studied by, Information Systems researchers and teachers.

This panel is the first organized by AIS SIGHCI. The purpose of the panel is to raise awareness of HCI research in the MIS community. By doing so, we hope to promote studies in the broadly defined HCI area, to attract more people to be involved in HCI studies especially within the MIS field, and to promote future AIS SIGHCI panels, workshops, and mini-tracks.

At this panel, the panelists will discuss their perspectives by answering the following questions:

1. What is HCI research in MIS, and how is it different for our field as opposed to Computer Science or Psychology?
2. How have you applied HCI principles/theories/frameworks in your own MIS research? If possible, please provide illustrations of where it was easy and also where it was difficult.
3. Do MIS journal editors and reviewers welcome HCI research? How does an HCI/MIS researcher maximize acceptability?
4. What can you say about the future of HCI research in the MIS field?

Each of the panelists will bring to the table their own biases about HCI study in MIS (HCI/MIS), which they summarize below.

**Jane Carey** believes that the study of human computer interaction (HCI) has evolved from a focus on physical-ergonomic issues in the early 1970s to an integrated view of the use of computers within organizational, social and global contexts today. A myriad of research techniques such as field studies, experimentation, case studies and survey research have all been applied to the goal of understanding the theoretical underpinnings of human computer interaction. Referent disciplines such as cognitive science, organizational behavior, human factors engineering, and computer science all contribute to the knowledge base of HCI. Publication outlets for HCI research have expanded as the field has matured. Major IS journals such as *MIS Quarterly* and *Information Systems Research* accept articles on HCI. A dozen or so journals now exist that focus on human computer interaction. Currently, HCI special interest groups are emerging in various IS professional societies. HCI has "come of age". An evolving model focuses on the interrelationships between the computer, the end user, and the analyst with research areas that include

1) human computer interaction, 2) information presentation, 3) system-user documentation, 4) interface specification tools, and 5) end user involvement.

**Fred Davis** would like to comment on how the HCI literature played a role in the development of the TAM model, and possible future directions for research that integrates HCI and user acceptance perspectives. By doing so, he will comment on the connection and differences of HCI/MIS and pure HCI research, the theoretical and methodological differences, the importance of HCI for MIS research, and history, current status, and future of HCI/MIS.

**Dennis Galletta** has found it interesting to see how HCI research in two fields (Computer Science and Psychology) is (or is not) interconnected with HCI literature in MIS journals. Unfortunately, HCI/MIS has not shared the compatibility enjoyed by the work in those two fields; much HCI work in those fields involves building systems and testing alternative designs. In contrast, our work is less often involved with building or evaluating specific designs, and more often addresses contextual issues as well as general principles, techniques, and management approaches. Our own internal view is also important to examine. Have the trends in the past decade toward interpretivist work in field and case studies diminished MIS journals' views of our largely positivist work? A review of HCI/MIS publications in recent years has provided some interesting statistics, which will be reviewed during the panel presentation. Also, the absence or under-representation of some seminal HCI works from HCI/MIS publications can also shed some light on how HCI/MIS fits into HCI research. Whether rising or diminishing, interrelated or independent, welcomed or not, most will agree that HCI/MIS research can provide a unique perspective that would certainly be conspicuous in its absence.

**Diane Strong** will talk about how her research on task-technology fit has informed her view of HCI. Much of the HCI research today is from two primary domains, computer scientists study the "C" in HCI and cognitive scientists study the "HI." Together, they have produced recommendations for much better interfaces for computer systems. There is a critical piece missing, however, from such a view of HCI, and that is the task. In a business environment, humans are interacting with computer systems to accomplish some task. The issue is not just HCI, but HCI in the context of a business task. Following the recommendations of computer scientists and cognitive psychologists is not enough to provide usable and useful interactions in the context of a variety of user tasks.